RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

September, 1987 232 Ogden Avenue — Jersey City, N.J. 07307 — (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL.

MEETING MINUTES

While the rest of the world vacationed R.N.A. conducted business as usual.

The June meeting was mostly taken up with details of our appearance before the Board of Adjustment, and our subsequent defeat of the proposed project for the property adjacent to Pohlmann Hall. The remainder of the meeting was a celebration of all members birthdays between Jan. and June.

Julys agenda was some old business, that of abandoned cars in our neighborhood, and the recurring summer problem of abuse of our local park. The result of our conference was the circulation of a petition that was presented to the Police Dept. with the hope of getting some real action to clean up the illegal activities taking place in the park.

Our August meeting revealed the results of the petition drive, a new proposal by the owners of the Pohlmann Hall property, and new ideas for community participation to keep our neighborhood as safe and crime free as possible.

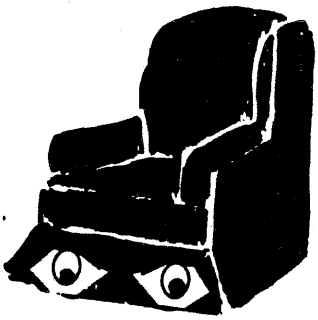
Although sometime it may seem as though our efforts garner no gain, we are always rewarded to find that persistance does pay-off. A group of united neighbors can make a difference in an indifferent world. Why not join us at the next meeting, Tuesday, Sept. 8th, 7:30pm at the Harborview Health Care Center, and see how much of a difference your presence can make.

Secretary
Maria E. Tuzzo

P.S. The refreshments for these meetings were provided by, G. Bogdan, C. Ryan, V. Rea, M. Tuzzo, R. Conrad, F. Santoro, and J. Allegretto.

FIRE ALERT

As we go to print, we sadly report that on Saturday, August 23, at approximately 4:00 a.m. there was a three alarm fire at 253 Ogden Avenue which spread to the houses at 251, 255 and 257 Ogden. The only casualty was a man named Eddie, who died in the fire and allegedly started the fire by smoking in bed. At-the-site information, yet to be confirmed, revealed that police never responded to a noisy party complaint at 253 Ogden. The complaint was phoned in by other tenants of 253, at 11:30 p.m. Friday evening and again at 2:00 a.m. Saturday morning. Also to be confirmed, was a report by neighbors that it took the Fire Department over 20 minutes to respond to the fire. The neighborhood people were amazing in their help and support for the families affected by the fire.



Under the Chair

RNA has been very active this summer to preserve and improve our neighborhood. The following are two reports detailing our success in these endeavors.

Pohlman Hall II: One issue has been the continuing attempts to overdevelop the parking lot next to Pohlman Hall at 154-156 Ogden Avenue (Block 740, Lots A-1 and part of Lot B). On June 4th, a group of over thirty concerned residents opposed a plan by Investment Properties (Frank Latinas and Fred Rosen) to build a 7-story, 42-unit condominium building with an underground garage on this site because they objected to the overwhelming height and density of the structure. The Board of Adjustment, after hearing nearly five hours of testimony, including a presentation from the residents with everything from maps and photographs to a scale model, voted unanimously against the project. RNA, realizing that the property should be developed, had proposed a compromise plan of five stories and approximately 20-units - which the developers refused repeatedly. Two proposals from the city's planning department (included in the developer's plan) to preserve the Palisades cliff portion of the property and to make a contribution to the city's affordable housing trust fund were supported by RNA. (Last year an earlier plan of these developers to build 24 townhouses literally on the Palisades cliff was also unanimously opposed by the residents and unanimously rejected by the Board of Adjustment.)

On August 6th, the developer once again came before the Board of Adjustment to request a rehearing for a new application. The proposal now is for a 5-story, 20-unit condo with 47 parking spaces. (Sounds familiar, doesn't it?) The Board approved of the rehearing, which will probably take place sometime this fall. The specifics of this "new plan" are as follows:

1) height - the new structure will be 47'(the height of the eaves of Pohlman Hall),

2) density - there will be 20 condominuim units (8 duplexes, 4 two-BR and 8 one-BR),

3) parking - there will be 47 spaces, 27 for the new building and 20 spaces for Pohlman Hall; parking will be in site in a street-level lot (eliminating the underground garage of the previous plan),

4) Fred Rosen, the architect, has promised to design the main entrance on the streetline (eliminating the appearance of a building columns as in the previous plan),

5) the project will have the same "footprint" as the previous plan (it will not occupy a greater percentage of the land),

6) the commitment not to build on the Palisades cliff and keep it as a natural preserve, and

7) the zoning variances needed-

a) use variance to allow a residential structure on an industrally-zoned property,

b) front yard setback to allow the building to be placed on on the streetline (as is Pohlman Hall and 164 Ogden Ave.), and

c) smaller parking spaces.

Although RNA has officially reserved an opinion of this new plan, in a meeting with Fred Rosen on Aug. 4th, we noted the incredible similarity of this plan to our original compromise in June. We plan to monitor this plan very closely and will keep our community informed on all new developments.

RNA would like to thank every person who contributed their own time and energy to this important project. RNA has consistently maintained the position that we are for development but we are

against overdevelopment that will destroy the character and tradition of our neighborhood. We are strong as a united voice - one that, if necessary, will be heard throughout the chambers of City Hall. When we fight for our neighborhood we are fighting for our lives. Again, it was a team effort that won these victories and it can only be done with a continuing commitment from every one of you.

Riverview Park: Because of the worsening situation in Riverview Park, especially evidenced this summer, angry residents decided to demand action from the police and city officials. On August 3rd, RNA presented to the Community Relations Council a petition containing over 360 signatures, protesting the deplorable conditions of the Park. (Copies of this petition were also sent to the Mayor, members of the City Council, and the Police Director.)

The following are the worst offenses:

1) gangs of young people hang out and act in anti-social ways,
2) the widespread use and sale of drugs,
3) the rampant consumption of beer and alcohol,
4) the constant littering of garbage, glass bottles and beer cans,
5) the shattering of glass bottles on the pavement and grass,
6) the playing of loud music till 1:00-2:00 AM,
7) playing basketball till 1:00-2:00 AM,
8) car thefts, breakins, and vandalism,
9) cars speeding on the street,
10) cars repaired and abandoned on the street, and
11) grafitti throughout the Park.

Our community has been more or less "content" to hear officials and the police say "we're doing the best with what we've got"! Now however, it is clear that their "best" is not good enough! Our city officials and, we as residents, have failed at providing a decent Park for recreation and, more importantly, at protecting ourselves from crime and other negative activities that dominate the Park and its surroundings.

On August 17th, a coalition of representatives from various neighborhood and block associations and concerned neighbors met in the Park, in front of the pavilion to take matters into their own hands. Stating that they were all aware of the negative conditions, they concentrated on positive solutions to improve the Park. Realizing that this should be a two-prong attack, two seperate lists were compiled: one demanding better services from the city and the other stating a group of citizen-organized activities to take place in the Park. The following are the demands that the community is making of the city:

1) more frequent police patrols in the Park to enforce laws against drugs, alcohol, noise, theft, vandalism and the 10:00 curfew,
2) the proper and timely repair and maintenance of the Park and its facilities, including the pavilion, sidewalks, trees and landscape,
3) installation of benches, better lighting and trash cans,
4) the implementation of the CDBG/NIP program for structural improvements in the Park (over $57,000.00 allocated),
5) conversion of the boarded-up rooms in the bottom of the pavilion as a police substation,
6) installation of "speed bumps" on Ogden Avenue at Griffith and Bowers Streets, and
7) allocation of funds for community-organized activities.

The following list is the first phase of these activities that can be organized by the community:

a) letters to the Alcoholic Beverages Commision and local retailers asking to cooperate in our campaign against selling liquor to minors,
b) letters to local retailers to strictly observe the city ordinance prohibiting the open display of spray paint cans and the sale of spray paint to minors,

Under the Chair cont'd.

c) community education of ordinances regarding drugs, alcohol, noise, grafitti, thefts, vandalism and the curfew,

d) establishment of a community "hot-line" for the purpose of gathering our own crime statistics,

e) the establishment of a youth basketball league in the month of September culminating in a tournament with prizes,

f) organization of two fall music concerts in the Park pavilion: the first occuring during the Labor Day weekend and the second during Heights Pride Week (also possible picnics scheduled for the same day), and

e) organization of a demonstration at City Hall to present our demands and recommendations and to ask for support of these above planned activites.

If this two-fold agenda is successful this fall, we will spend the winter months planning and organizing a whole season of similar activities for the summer of 1988.

As we go to press two events are being planned: the City Hall demonstration and the next meeting in the Park on August 31st.

NEW FEATURE

The "What Can Be Done" column is a new feature of the newsletter. We will print any gripes you may have with anything you see in the area that you feel needs attention. It can be something that is unjust, or illegal, or annoying, or a nuisance etc;. Your name will not be printed if you so request. However we must have your name on record or we will not consider your gripe for publication.

The Editor

MOTTO

People don't plan to fail
They fail to plan.

Submitted by M. Tresca

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

The proposed fall schedule for the monthly Monday evening meetings of the Community Relations Council is as follows:

a) September 1 (first Tuesday because of Labor Day) - Rev. Elijah M. Hendon, Human Rights Commission,

b) October 5 (first Monday)- Mariano Vega, Director of J.C. Welfare Office,

c) November 2 (first Monday)- Fire Chief John T. Mullins, and

d) December 7 (first Monday)- election of officers.

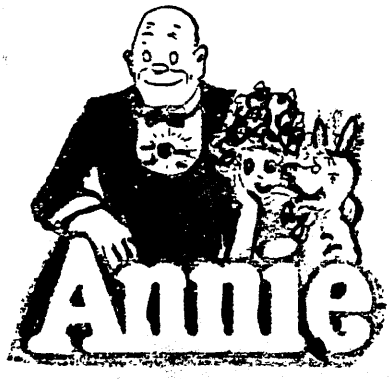
The meetings are always held from 7:30 to 9:30 PM on the second floor of the North District Police station at the corner of Central Aven. and Hutton St. Besides each of the above events, each meeting has a complaint and question and answer period for current problems in the community. Please attend and inform your police and city officials of the status of your neighborhood.

What ???? Can be???? Done????

In light of the recent fire, I am concerned about people parking so close to the corners that fire apparatus had difficulty getting onto Ogden Avnue. In the past, the police, who had been told of this condition, refused to ticket the offenders. I wonder how many minutes were lost because the fire trucks wasted more time trying to turn onto our block.

Since it is against the law to park your car directly on or near a corner, why is the law being ignored?

CCL



S.P.O.C PRESENTS

The St Paul of the Cross theatre group will present the musical ANNIE at two matinee performances Oct. 18th & 25th, and at two evening performances Oct. 20th & 22nd. See our Oct. newsletter for more details.

FOR SALE

1. 1976 Mercury Capri, white-black interior, 4 cyl., runs well, good cond., minor repairs needed. $1,100.00 call 435-8868

2. Dining Room Table - Contempory- 5' x 3' oak table with three tinted glass panel inserts, 4 chairs excellent condition. Paid $1,200.00-asking $350.00. Call 435-8868.

3. Cat - grey calico- Free to good home, Female, spayed-shots, 1½ years old, small (kitten like). Call 435-8868.

4. Dog - ½ Sheperd ½ Shelty-"Smau", Female, spayed, 1 year old, 30 lbs. lots of love and energy, have trained, paper trained. Call 435-8868

ATTENTION VOTERS

If you have not registered to vote, you can do so at the September RNA meeting. Kathy Brennan will have the necessary forms available at that time.

COMING ATTRACTION

While our meetings are always interesting, you might want to take note that the October R.N.A. meeting will have a guest speaker, Dr. Doris Molina. The topic of discussion; Drug abuse in todays society and accidental poisoning in the home. The October meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 13th, at the Harborview Health Care Center at 7:30pm.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The families of Bernard Courtney and Peter Tuzzo Sr, gratefully acknowledge the sympathy expressed by R.N.A. members at the passing of their loved ones.

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Thanks to the Police Dept. for their attempt to remove abandoned vehicles from our area. A recent example is that of a Ford Bronco with PA plates, abandoned on Wood Pl. and removed on Aug. 20th. This auto was reported to police by one of our neighborhood watch members.

NOODLE – DOODLES

1. READING

2. MIND / MATTER

3. T O W N

1. READING BETWEEN THE LINES
2. MIND OVER MATTER
3. DOWNTOWN

Neighbors listen to each other at special Riverview Park meeting on August 17th.

Photos by Tracy Keller courtesy of J.C. Reporter.

TWO IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

① SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

FIRE CHIEF JOHN MULLINS

at our next RNA MEETING

SEPTEMBER 8, TUESDAY

7:30 PM

HARBORVIEW HEALTHCARE FACILITY
(OGDEN AVE. & FRANKLIN ST)
SECOND FLOOR

Chief Mullins will dicuss and answer questions about the recent fires at 253-255 Ogden Avenue.

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER
FIRE CHIEF JOHN MULLINS

② HELP TAKE BACK OUR PARK

CITY HALL DEMONSTRATION
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10
6:00 PM
280 GROVE STREET

This demonstration is to protest the deplorable conditions in RIVERVIEW PARK and present our DEMANDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS to the City Council to provide ADEQUATE POLICE PROTECTION, PARK MAINTENANCE, REPAIR AND RENOVATION.

(CALL 963-1001 for more information)

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RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

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